

# Preventing Injuries to Hotel and Restaurant Workers

Focus Report



**WorkSafe**



WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION  
BOARD  
OF BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

## ABOUT THE WCB

Preventing on-the-job injury and disease is the first priority of the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of British Columbia. WCB officers inspect worksites in B.C. to make sure they comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, which sets out minimum workplace standards for health and safety. The WCB also investigates serious workplace accidents and consults with employers, supervisors, and workers to promote health and safety in the workplace.

Under the requirements of the *Workers Compensation Act*, a worker must report an injury or a disabling occupational disease as soon as possible to the employer. The employer must report work-related injuries, occupational diseases, and work-related deaths to the WCB within three days. A worker may not make an agreement with the employer to give up WCB benefits.

If a worker suffers a work-related injury or illness, the WCB provides fair compensation that may include medical costs, loss of earnings, physical rehabilitation, and pensions. The WCB also works with employers to help injured workers return to work. If a worker is killed on the job, counselling and financial help are made available to the victim's family. For more information on requirements or eligibility for WCB coverage, contact the WCB office nearest you.

## WCB PREVENTION INFORMATION LINE

The WCB Prevention Information Line can answer your questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and reporting a workplace accident or incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

Phone 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1 888 621-7233 (621-SAFE) toll-free in British Columbia.

To report after-hours and weekend accidents and emergencies, call 604 273-7711 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1 866 922-4357 (WCB-HELP) toll-free in British Columbia.

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- British Columbia & Yukon Hotels' Association
- Hotel, Restaurant, & Culinary Employees & Bar Tenders Union Local 40
- Windjammer Hotel

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# INTRODUCTION

## About this report

About 8,900 workers in the hotel and restaurant industries are injured on the job every year in British Columbia. More than half of these workers have to take time off work because of their injuries. The types of injuries range from severe cuts, burns, and scalds to strains, sprains, and broken bones. Some hotel and restaurant workers have even been killed on the job.

This report provides employers, supervisors, workers, and health and safety personnel in hotels and restaurants with information on accidents in these industries and how to prevent them.

- Part 1 describes how the hotel and restaurant industries contribute to the provincial economy. It also provides an overview of injury rates.
- Parts 2 and 3 contain information on how often the most common accidents occur in the hotel and restaurant industries, the sources of these accidents, and the occupations most affected. Part 2 covers the hotel industry. Part 3 covers the restaurant industry.
- Part 4 contains information on how to prevent common accidents. It provides safety tips on cuts, knives, slips and falls, floors, stairways, storage areas, ladders, and burns and scalds. Part 4 also provides information on young workers, overexertion injuries, and preventing exposure to HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis B and C.



- Part 5 contains an overview of a health and safety program (including a guideline for small businesses) and an overview of a violence prevention program.
- Part 6 provides information on how to obtain WCB assistance, information, courses, publications, and videos.

## Hotels and restaurants part of WorkSafe plan

Several industries account for a high percentage of the injury and disease claims accepted by the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). The Prevention Division of the WCB has implemented a strategic plan — known as WorkSafe — to reduce injuries and accidents in these industries. Hotels and restaurants are included in the WorkSafe plan.



## Notes on sources and statistics

The information on employment in the hotel and restaurant industries was provided in 1997 by Statistics Canada from its Labour Force Survey. Please note that the figures on employment are based on Statistics Canada's accommodation and food services industry classification, which may be slightly different from the WCB's hotel and restaurant classification groups.

Information on the gross domestic product of the hotel and restaurant industries in British Columbia is from *System of National Accounts: Aggregate Productivity Measure*, Statistics Canada, 1996.

Information on the future of the hotel and restaurant industries in British Columbia is from *Overview of the Service Sector -- Accommodation and Food Services, Economy Guide*, Human Resources Development Canada, 1996.

Information on young workers is from the WCB's *Protecting Young Workers: Locus Report*. Portions of that report were adapted from *Protecting Working Teens*, a publication of the Children's Safety Network National Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Center, Education Development Center, Inc. and the Occupational Health Surveillance Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 1995.

### What groups are included in the statistics

Unless otherwise noted, the statistics in this report are based on the claims experience of firms registered under the following WCB classification groups:

#### Restaurants

- 627009 — restaurants and permanently located food concessions

#### Hotels

- 62700 — hotels
- 62703 — auto courts, campgrounds, motels, resort cabins, trailer courts, and other tourist resorts

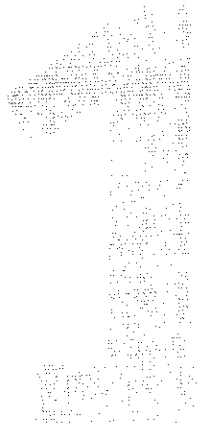
Some premises register in different classifications. The restaurant and hotel classification groups listed above do *not* include:

- Bed and breakfasts, lodging houses, rooming houses, and social service and health facilities with overnight accommodation
- Discothèques
- Licensed public houses and lounges if they are operated by a separate company than the one that operates the hotel they are located in
- Catering
- Cafeterias and restaurants run by universities, schools, and other institutions

Statistics for the hotel and restaurant industries are presented in separate parts of the report. However, there is some overlap in the statistics. For example, the statistics presented on hotels include the experience of restaurants registered under the hotel classification. However, a tenant who operates a restaurant in a hotel registers separately with the WCB under the restaurant classification group.

Although the statistics presented in this report do not reflect the claims experience of all premises that provide food services and lodging, the information in the report — particularly the prevention information in Parts 4 and 5 — will help all employers and workers at these worksites improve health and safety.

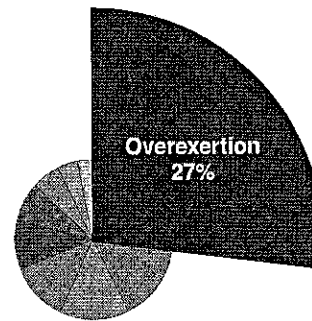




**INDUSTRY**

**BASICS**

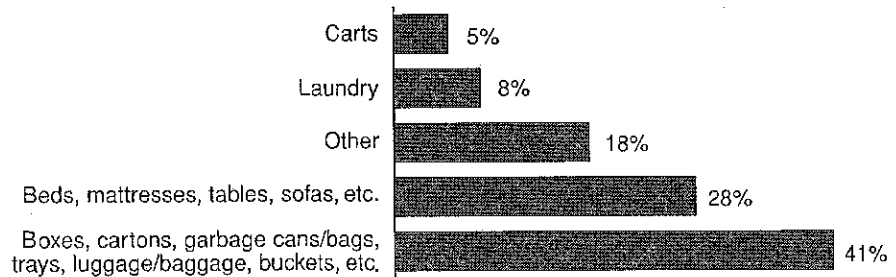
**Hotel industry:  
Claims from overexertion accidents,  
1992-96**



*While lifting a tank of pop weighing 23 kg (about 50 lb.), a worker felt her back snap. This accident resulted in a strain to the worker's lower back.*

*A housekeeper strained her lower back while leaning over and pushing a queen-sized mattress with her left knee.*

*A housekeeper felt pain in her lower back while repeatedly bending over to pick up laundry from the floor.*



### Overexertion

Overexertion accidents accounted for 27 percent of all claims accepted from 1992 to 1996. The following is a breakdown of overexertion accidents by the type of object handled:

- Handling containers accounted for 41 percent. Boxes, cartons, garbage cans or bags, trays, luggage or baggage, and buckets are examples of common containers.
- Moving fixtures and furniture (for example, beds, mattresses, tables, and sofas) contributed to 28 percent of these accidents.
- Handling laundry was responsible for 8 percent.
- Handling carts or grocery buggies contributed to 5 percent.

The occupations with the most overexertion accidents were:

- Room attendants — 39 percent
- Wait staff — 10 percent
- Kitchen helpers and laundry workers — 9 percent
- Chefs and cooks — 8 percent